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ABSTRACT

Educators who teach students to write often teach students to create using the writing process. Students are encouraged to brainstorm topics, write a first draft, revise based on the response from a teacher or fellow student, proofread, and generate a final draft. Teachers maintain that students are often motivated by the use of technology to create drafts and make revisions. But with the use of Writing Expedition software, students are also using technology to review other students' papers in an online environment and leave comments without touching the original draft. Writing Expedition allows students to review several other students' papers with the click of a mouse. Students drop editing tabs about punctuation, capitalization, and syntax errors or type personalized comments in a text box in a draft other than the original. This paper describes how Writing Expedition allowed several sixth graders to read and comment on their classmates' writing in an online environment. A description of the results demonstrates how students left more comments and read more papers than would be possible in the classroom with the use of pen and paper because they had unlimited space to write comments and did not interfere with the original draft. Contains 39 references. Appendixes contain sample student papers with comments. (Author/RS)

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A writer's journey:
The use of Writing Expedition software to support student revision

By
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Master's Thesis
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Abstract

Educators who teach students to write often teach students to create using the writing process. Students are encouraged to brainstorm topics, write a first draft, revise based on the response from a teacher or fellow student, proofread, and generate a final draft. Teachers maintain that students are often motivated by the use of technology to create drafts and make revisions.

But with the use of Writing Expedition software, students are also using technology to review other students' papers in an online environment and leave comments without touching the original draft. Writing Expedition allows students to review several other students' papers with the click of a mouse. Students drop editing tabs about punctuation, capitalization, and syntax errors or type personalized comments in a text box in a draft other than the original.

This paper describes how Writing Expedition allowed several sixth graders to read and comment on their classmates' writing in an online environment. A description of the results demonstrates how students left more comments and read more papers than would be possible in the classroom with the use of pen and paper because they had unlimited space to write comments and did not interfere with the original draft.

CHAPTER 1: Problem Statement

Writing is a process that involves steps. These steps include prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing. Technology can be used to work through the writing process. According to the writing process research done by Calkins (1991) and Atwell (1989) writing is a social phenomenon. Students need to conference with others as they write, and need to write for a variety of audiences. Students need to realize that their writing will change as they work through the process or as they interact with classmates, their inner selves and the page. Atwell uses her own writing and overhead transparencies to demonstrate mini lessons about revision. She explains that students " . . . don't have the methods for manipulating the page-adding information, deleting it, changing it, or moving it around" (1989, p.162). She explains that revision is one of the most difficult steps of the writing process. "Sometimes crossing out is hard for kids because it messes up the page. Students who have never seen a revised draft are reluctant to cross out, write between the lines or in the margins, make inserts with carets and arrows . . . " (p. 163). She says mini lessons, which involve teachers modeling writing, are helpful.

Writing using technology will continue. Regardless of technology's effect on quality, quantity and motivation, students need to know how to write using the computer to succeed in college and in many careers. Teachers need to continue to teach the skills needed to compose thoughts and communicate thoughts through the use of computers and the web. Schools are adopting curriculum managers, so that writing using the computer can be tied directly to curriculum in math, social studies, reading and science.

In the future, students will be writing using the computer. Electronic portfolios will allow students to save all writing to a disk, which can be transferred to new teachers and taken home for parents to see (South, 2001). Students will use writing software to create interactive stories and post online classroom newsletters.

We know that writing is a process, and students need to share their drafts with authentic audiences. Teachers cannot read every student's paper so teachers use peer conferencing and revision. In a pen and paper environment, students write a draft, share it with peers, and peers write suggestions on the student's original drafts. Now we need to look at how technology affects this process. What would happen if students could give suggestions to other students in an online environment where they are not making changes but offering suggestions for changes?

Writing Expedition is writing management software that allows students to brainstorm, draft, submit their drafts and have other students respond without writing on the original draft. Student can have several students read and offer suggestion for revision without changing the student's original draft. The use of this software raises interesting questions for research. Would students offer more quality suggestions if they were not inhibited by a small space to write their suggestions? Or perhaps students would offer more quality suggestions if they did not feel that they were imposing on the writer's personal space by writing over and around their writing on the original?

If a student writer receives responses from classmates about his or her writing and these responses are recorded in a separate version of the student's draft, what will the student do with these responses?

How does peer revision change when several students can read another student's writing online and make suggestions without writing on the original?

CHAPTER 2:Literature Review

The traditional student/teacher relationship is quickly disappearing with the inclusion of computers and technology in schools. Teacher are no longer lecturing but facilitating the learning process by making information accessible to students. (McGrath, 1998). The research presented in this review does show that technology can motivate students to learn, but more research into the implications technology usage has on the writing process, especially revision, must occur. This review first looks at the theory behind a process writing approach. It then explores how technology affects classroom learning. Finally, it focuses on how technology usage shapes, and is shaped by a writing process approach in which revision is valued and practiced.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing workshops are being conducted in classrooms across the United States but each workshop is very unique. However, some of the key components of a writing workshop include self –selecting of writing topics, writing several drafts, writing for an audience (classmates), sharing writing, and revising writing based on feedback from peers and teachers.

TECHNOLOGY'S EFFECT ON CLASSROOM LEARNING

With the initiation of technology into classrooms, research must continue about how the use of technology affects classroom learning. According to a poll released by the American Association of School Administrators and The Lightspan Partnership, ninety-six percent of educators recognized the importance of technology as a tool for motivating

all students to learn ("Educators Enter Debate", 1998). Sixty percent of educators say they have seen increases in student motivation with technology in the classroom ("Educators Enter Debate", 1998).

How does technology affect students' learning? One theory is that technology motivates students to learn when it provides an authentic experience for students or a skill that can be used in a real-life setting (Quinones & Kirshstein, 1998). Another theory is that technology provides an individualized approach to teaching (Alden, 2000). Students also feel more pride in their work when it is on the web for a larger audience (McGrath, 1998). One major theory, that technology levels the playing field for many students from different socio-economic and minority backgrounds, is heavily researched (Quinones & Kirshstein, 1998). Perhaps even the social interaction a student has with peers when working on the site could motivate students to learn (McGrath, 199). The use of Writing Expedition allows students to interact because their published work is viewed and commented on by other students.

Authentic Experience

Communicating with peers online is an authentic experience or an experience in which students are doing something they could use as adults outside of the school walls (Quinones & Kirshstein, 1998).

Peer Collaboration

Use of technology in the classroom incorporates the ideas of an authentic experience and peer collaboration. In "Publishing Student Work On-Line", Cathy de Moll states that web-publishing and e-mail allow students to be judged by their peers and adults. It shows them we take their work seriously and we value it (Moll, 1998). This

allows for engagement of the student reader and student writer in developing a piece of writing. Students see writing as an authentic task that is written for a specific audience.

TECHNOLOGY AND WRITING

The most common use of technology in writing is word processing. Research suggests that students who use word processors are motivated to write and share their writing with peers (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Word processing also affected the editing process because students did not have to rewrite their paper multiple times. They found tools like cut and paste and spell check allowed them to rework their papers quickly. Word processing also allowed students to create polished final drafts for many different audiences. Students were motivated to write more when they used technology (e-mail) to share their writing with others. Writing achievement, however, was not one of the most notable benefits of word processing.

Batschelet and Woodson (1991) found that students expressed positive feelings about using the computer and said drafting was easier. Lichtenstein's (1996) findings do not show a difference in writing improvement between students who used the writing lab and those who used pen and paper.

The writing of students who were taught the writing process with a hypertext model with sample stories, note cards, idea buttons, minilessons and cut and paste tools, did not increase the quantity of writing (Lohr, 1996). However, Lohr felt that software that aids in teaching process writing should continue to be developed and used. Ollila's research shows that word processors did help students write more quickly and easily but lack of keyboarding skills did slow some students down (Ollila, L. et al., 1993).

> The computer's power, of freeing students from the relatively labour intensive editing processes of using pen and paper, greatly enhances the writing process. Students develop a greater sense of freedom to change their original stories, which encourages them to spend more time concentrating on higher level thought processes (Ollila, p.22).

The use of the computer makes revising easier and therefore makes it more likely that students will revise but teachers must plan specific activities to be completed when using technology. Much research shows that students are motivated to write when they can share their writing with others including online readers or an audience because they knew their classmates would be reading

In my research, I observed how students were motivated by the use of technology and by the task of writing for authentic audiences. This research study documented whether students felt that the writing process is less difficult or daunting using this software. Much research in writing and technology suggests that peer collaboration and revision help students become better writers. So my research also focused on how the use of the Writing Expedition software allowed students to collaborate and offer revision suggestions without compromising the original and how it affected students' attitudes about writing. In this research study, I observed students engaged in a process that allows them to "re-vision" their piece by looking at their paper through someone else's eyes yet still maintaining the originality of their writing.

CHAPTER 3: Design of Study

SETTING AND POPULATION

I observed students in the sixth grade classroom in which I teach Language Arts and Social Studies. The students used writing management software, Writing Expedition, to write a personal narrative. Writing Expedition allowed students to brainstorm, draft, post their writing, and revise their classmates' papers in a paperless environment online. I began by reviewing the writing process with my class. We spent time brainstorming, developing topics and writing one draft with pen and paper in the classroom. The students then took their first drafts to the computer lab and used the word processing tool in Writing Expedition to type their papers. The students submitted their papers and received comments from several students, and they had more opportunities to revise before publishing their pieces. I met with two groups of 25 students and I used Writing Expedition during several forty-minute Language Arts blocks throughout the marking period.

As of 1999, 75% of this suburban district's students went on to higher education. In 1997, the Pennsylvania Assessment Tests were given to 5th grade students. In math, the average district score was 1370 and the state median was 1300. In reading, the average district score was 1330 and the state median was 1300. A majority of students plan to go to college and perform at an average ability. The district is expanding and classroom size is rising.

The classes that participated in this study were of mixed abilities but have had technology instruction since first grade. In this school, the students have a computer class

in a lab setting one time in a six-day cycle. In that classroom setting, they keep journals and develop multimedia projects. I utilize technology in my classroom and have two student computers for word processing and Internet research. There is Internet access in every classroom and there are three computer labs in our school. Students save their work to the server and can access their saved work at any networked computer.

LENGTH OF STUDY

My study lasted for one marking period of the school year. I taught the writing process by first completing a writing assignment on paper and then allowing them to use Writing Expedition to revise and publish a personal narrative.

MY ROLE

My role was a participant observer. I spent most of my time as the role of teacher. I did take the time to step out of my teacher role, and be a researcher. I collected and analyzed data to discover whether there was an overlying theme in terms of writing, revision and technology. I am always observing how students work together and respond to my teaching.

DATA COLLECTION

I sent home a letter explaining to parents and students that I was currently collecting data for my thesis, and that I would be observing and talking to students about their use of Writing Expedition.

I observed my two classes during the first marking period and found a sample group of students who liked to write and took revision suggestions from others. I observed these students during all writing assignments. My criterion for deciding to what

extent students enjoys writing was a writing interest inventory. Through class discussion and observation, I found students who were comfortable with the computer and Writing Expedition. This was important because I wanted the study's participants to not be preoccupied with keyboarding and basic computer procedures when using this program. I wanted the students who felt comfortable with computers so I could observe how the peer revision changed their writing and not their unfamiliarity with the computer.

I picked five students. I took field notes and observations in a journal. I reflected after each session in the lab and noted behaviors. I also recorded what I observed when the students were writing and discussing their use of Writing Expedition.

I conducted a general interview with my sample group to document their feelings about how they felt about writing using Writing Expedition versus pen and paper during their roles as a peer reviser and as a peer reviewer. A peer reviser is the role the student has when he or she is writing the piece and posting it for suggestions. In Writing Expedition, peer writers used the word processing tool to type their draft. They then posted their work and waited for other students to comment on their papers. The peer writer was then able to view each person's comments on the screen and return to the untouched original to improve their first draft. Another role a student has is a peer reviewer. A peer reviewer is the role a student has when he or she is responding and commenting to another student's writing. Writing Expedition allowed these students to add comments by clicking on buttons labeled with comments punctuation, capitalization, subject-verb agreement, fragments and run-ons. Students were also allowed to write open-ended comments in a text box. In the interviews in which students discussed their

roles as peer writer and peer reviewers, were held privately in my classroom after completing the project. Some questions included:

PEER REVISER
Did you write differently using this program?

What did you do with the suggestions?

Did you find comments helpful? How? Give me an example?

What comments did you use?

What comments didn't you use?

Would you like to do more writing with this program? Why?

If you were a teacher, would you have your students do this? Why? What is the benefit for other kids?

Do you prefer to write using pen and paper or Writing Expedition? Why?

PEER REVIEWER

What do you need to know to revise other people's papers using this program?

How did your comments change when you used Writing Expedition?

Do you think other students will use your comments? Why?

What types of suggestions did you give?

Did you include comments or just marks? Why?

I printed out each student's paper and discussed the changes that were made based on the comments of classmates. I also printed out comments written by the students on other students' papers. I asked students to look at the comments they received and asked them how they used them and why they did or did not use specific comments.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Students brainstormed ideas for a personal narrative and then wrote a first draft of the personal narrative that told a story about a memorable event in their lives .The personal narrative was to be about one typed page in length and was to include details that brought the memory to life. Students wrote a first draft in classroom using pen and paper. I then took them to the lab and modeled Writing Expedition on an overhead monitor. I showed students how to type their paper and submit it to be read by other students. I took questions and asked students for their reactions. I answered questions about the spell check and how to add comments. Students then took this paper to the lab and typed their first draft using the Writing Expedition word processing tool. Cochran-Smith's (1991) review of literature found that students who used word processors were motivated to write and share with peers.

Students were then shown how to submit their papers and wait for a response from other students. Students clicked on the submit button and they received a confirmation that their writing was posted. Students were then able to access a list of all of the posted papers that were listed by student name. I told each student to read a specific paper from another classmate who was also finished. They then clicked on that student's name and were given a draft of the writing to add editing tabs (predetermined comments that you could click, drag and drop into the document such as *punctuation, spelling, capitalization, run-on, fragment and subject-verb agreement*) and comments (student-generated comments created within a text box). Students who were finished

revising their assigned drafts began to read other papers. The students were excited and motivated to read the work of their peers and communicate with them. This was interesting to me because many students want to get on with writing their final draft rather than giving or getting more suggestions. Some students spent a majority of the time typing their papers because they lacked keyboarding skills, while others raced ahead and read several submitted papers. Each child did have their paper read by one other student in the class. Students were then told to go back and revise their own papers using the suggestions given by classmates and then submit their final draft to me.

I chose to interview the students who had worked most quickly, who had written a draft, responded to several other students, and then edited their own work and submitted it to me. These interviews focused on the two roles of the students when using this program: peer reviewer and peer reviser. A peer reviewer is the role a student had when he or she was commenting on another student's writing. A peer reviser is the role a student had when he or she was revising his or her original draft based on the input and suggestions of their peers. Students described their reaction to Writing Expedition and how their participation in revision changed because of the use of this program.

After conducting my research study and analyzing my data, several themes related to changes in peer revision and how students use peer comments became apparent. Writing Expedition allows more reviewers to see the students' writing, which leads to more comments. Because these comments are easy to add without changing the original draft and these comments are easy to read and understand in this program, students make more revisions. One change in peer revision was that there were more students reading and commenting on each other's papers with Writing Expedition in the computer lab than

in the pen and paper environment in the classroom. Another change in peer revision was that students wrote many comments and found many spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors. During interviews with participants in the study, students reported that they made more of these suggestions because they could suggest changes on separate drafts rather than on the original. Also students who were normally disinterested in writing became more motivated to participate in the revision that involved Writing Expedition. For each of these themes, evidence will be presented in terms of what the students did in the computer lab and what students reported later in interviews.

SHARING WRITING IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

After the initial introduction to Writing Expedition, which involved the teacher modeling the program on an overhead monitor, students began to comment on the benefits of this program. Students made comments like: "You can see other people's work right there on the screen. You can look at other people's work. I can read my friend's paper. It helps writing. Kids helping kids."

Writing Expedition allowed more students to look at a writing piece than in the classroom environment. This supports Quinones's and Kirshstein's research that found that if teachers are "to prepare students for the technology-laden world, the most relevant uses for technology are as tools and communication channels" (1999, p. 11) Most students had a least four of their classmates add editing tabs and personal comments to their papers. This was different from the practice of peer review on pencil and paper drafts. These drafts were primarily shared with just one other person. Calkins (1991) explained that revision can lead students to "re-vision" or to look at their ideas and

writing in a new way. Writing Expedition allowed more students to provide comments and those comments required the writer to look at their writing differently. Each student spent time commenting on another student's paper. Students gave suggestions about mechanics but also asked questions when their peer's writing did not make sense by typing questions in the text box. They asked questions about the flow and structure of the writing also. Students had at least one peer read their writing and comment on it.

During interviews after the writing process, students discussed their experiences when they shared their writing in an online environment. Jim explained, "You can tell people what's wrong, and you can get different people's opinions." John also saw the same benefits of the program. "I think it (Writing Expedition) is a good idea because you get different people's opinions."

Writing Expedition also cut down on the amount of time between drafting and revision. A student could submit a draft and receive comments from several peers in minutes where in the regular classroom the process could take a week. Mary commented on this idea. "It's so fast. You can look at someone's paper so fast. It doesn't take much time to share your writing,"

Communicating online is an authentic experience that allows students to write for an audience. Students are participating in an experience that adults do on a day-to-day basis. Moll's (1998) research found that students enjoy sharing writing through e-mail because it shows that their writing has value and is taken seriously. Olivia commented on how writing for classmates makes the writing process different for her. "It makes me read my writing over and over because I know people are going to read it. It's good to have other kids read each other's papers." Cynthia Addison explained that her students were

motivated when they knew their brochures would be posted on the web for parents, peers and teachers to see (McGrath, 1989). Writing is a social phenomenon as stated by Calkins (1991) that requires students to write and change their writing with the help of others including teachers, other students, parents and siblings.

MORE PEER REVISION

In addition to allowing more people to see the student's writing, Writing Expedition provides an easy-to-use format for commenting. Because commenting was easy for students in Writing Expedition, they tended to give more comments. Morgan read five other students' papers and added over twenty editing tabs pinpointing errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. She also added five personal comments. One of the personal comments suggested that a student restructure her narrative. "You should put the second paragraph before the first one as an introduction. Some of the words in your story need to be capitalized, and a few punctuation errors." Olivia spent a lot of time on her original draft, but did read two other student papers and gave many editing tabs and two comments with over 4 sentences in each. Jim read five other papers and added approximately twenty-five editing tabs and three comments. Allison read two other papers and added ten editing tabs and two comments.

When asked about how her peer revision changed, Morgan said "I wrote more comments. I gave more of the blue boxes." Olivia, Jim, and Ashely also felt they gave more comments in their roles as peer reviewers.

Students were also asked how the use of these comments changed their own writing after they finished this writing piece. Allison, a peer reviser, stated that more

comments led to a more organized final draft. "I had more comments to help me write. I can get rid of things just by pushing backspace. It made my story much better. I had a run-on and fixed it and my story is more organized now."

COMMENTING WITHOUT CHANGING ORIGINAL

During the process, all peer reviewers used the blue tabs and text boxes to express their suggestions and advice to the peer revisers. This program allowed the students to suggest in an open format that had unlimited space. Normally in the classroom, these comments would have been discussed orally or forgotten by the time students had a chance to talk to the original author of the work. With Writing Expedition, students used the unlimited space to give suggestions without leaving anything out. Most text box suggestions seemed to be a stream of consciousness that flowed from the student reviewer's brain onto the page.

During interviews, students revealed some of the benefits of writing on a different draft and not the original. Allison felt that she made more comments because she did not have a small space to write in and she was not changing the original. "I gave more [comments]. When you do pen and paper, there is not as much space. But when you use the computer, their writing is done and you just get your own little box. I thought with paper, if I wrote a comment and scribbled out their writing, they might want what they had and it would be hard to go back." When asked about a particularly long comment Allison wrote for Olivia and if she would do this on paper, Allison responded "No, there's not enough space." Atwell explained that revising is the most difficult part of writing, and that students are reluctant to cross out because "it messes up the page"

(1989). This program made it easier for students to participate fully in the revision process without intruding into the writer's personal space or messing up their peer's writing.

John felt Writing Expedition made it easier to understand what the comments meant and to see how they fit into his entire writing piece. "When you look at a computer screen, you can see more than when you are looking at a piece of paper. Sometimes you can't understand another person's comments. I think when you are on a computer you see the ideas and what the person is talking about." Jim also found it easier to understand other students' comments. " . . .I can understand people's comments better. It is neater. You can just drag a little button to add a comment." Olivia agreed and said, "On paper sometimes it's hard to read and understand comments and where to put stuff." Alyssa also liked the idea that she was not writing on the original. "You can make corrections but only see them in the box and not on the paper."

Students also expressed appreciation that they did not have to keep rewriting their draft over and over. John said, "You don't have to keep writing your drafts. You can look over it and keep reading and reading it. But on a piece of paper, you have to rewrite." John found the task of revision less daunting with the use of the word processor because students did not have to rewrite each draft and they had editing tools at their fingertips (Batschelet & Woodson, 1991).

MOTIVATION TO REVISE

McGrath's research found that "technology increases student motivation, and motivated students are more receptive, more engaged and more likely to learn"

(McGrath, 1989, p.2). Students appeared motivated when using Writing Expedition. They were focused on the task, wanted to read others' writing, and were excited about making comments. Students who were more motivated seemed to be more receptive to suggestions of others, and were more likely to learn how to use the writing process to improve their writing and communication of ideas. After the first session, students asked when we would be returning to the computer lab to work on their writing. Even after the completion of the writing project, students asked if they could use Writing Expedition when we were at the lab for a different activity.

After using the program for two forty-minute class periods, students were asked if they enjoyed using the program. All of the ten students who were asked said they enjoyed using the program and would like to use it again. Students made comments like "It's fun to use the tabs" or "It was fun." Allison even compared it to a fun activity she does at home on the computer. "I like it a lot. It's kinda' like AOL(instant messaging) that I like to use at home to talk to my friends." Jen's comment looked much like what an instant messaging message might say. "AWWW, yours is kool! when I was at the beach once a seagull stole my goldfish. well i gtg(go to go) !bye!"

Daniel, a student who has difficulty starting writing projects and organizing his ideas, was very interested in reading other people's papers and making comments. He reviewed over six papers and added comments. For students like Daniel, this program gives them a chance to see examples of personal narratives that can give them ideas and a model of the structure of a personal narrative. In the classroom, this would be difficult because he would most likely only read one paper and not be able to make the connection.

SAMPLE USES OF COMMENTS

I had the opportunity to observe Morgan work through the revision of her own paper after student comments were added. We walked though the process together. Morgan said she would make the changes as she reread her paper and looked at the draft with suggestions. "I'd make the change and then read on to what else they had to say." Morgan continued this process and used comments about verb tense and punctuation and to revise her paper.

John used his comments about run-ons, spelling and incomplete sentence errors. He said he did not use the subject-verb agreement because he didn't understand what it was. Allison said she used many of her comments but felt she did not need a comma that the other student had suggested so she disregarded the comment.

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROGRAM

Students did not have difficulty with the tools of the program once they learned the process. But it is critical that students be given ample opportunities to work with the program before using the final product as a graded assignment. When asked if there were any problems with the program, Jim said, "Students could get mixed up and not save and ruin their paper."

Keyboarding was a challenge for some students because it slowed down the writing process. This finding echoes that of Ollila (1993). Some students were preoccupied with the keys and typing. Allison, who has average keyboarding skills, said she occasionally prefers using pen and paper. "It's hard because sometimes you don't memorize where the keys are and it takes longer to type. But sometimes it is good too." Allison explained that at first keyboarding slowed her down but in the long run it really

helped make the revision process easier. Allison's viewpoint agrees with Ollila's study that stated that although keyboarding can slow students down, the computer has the power "of freeing students from the relatively labour intensive editing processes of pen and paper" and "greatly enhances the writing process" (Ollila, 1993, p. 22).

Some students seemed to rush to get through the process and spent more time on commenting and less time revising their own papers. Students used the comments that were given to them but did not add any of their own ideas after rereading the first draft. Self-revision is a vital part of the writing process Another problem was the availability of printers. Students could also not print their papers in the lab and look at a hard copy of their paper. Some students had difficulty finding errors on the large monitor that would have been obvious on the printed page. Jim said, "In writing, you would notice that you didn't capitalize, but in typing might forget to hold down the shift even though you know it should be capitalized."

There is also an issue of privacy. Some students appeared a little nervous that anyone could read their paper. After all, these papers were events from their personal lives. I felt that some the writers who had difficulty writing were embarrassed that one of the top writers in the class was looking at their work. Typically in the classroom, students could pick someone to read their paper. They could choose a friend if their writing was something personal or problematic. If I were to do this activity with students again, I would make them aware that their writing would be shared with others and that they might to take this into account when selecting a topic for their writing.

Access to the lab was an issue for this process. Students had to wait two days before they could return to the lab. Some students would not remember whose paper they

had read before and if they had finished commenting. Some students were still typing after the second session while other students were waiting for someone to read their paper.

This program is part of COMPASS learning, a district-wide curriculum-management tool that allows teachers to give students drill-and-practice activities. These activities are aligned with what students are learning in the classroom and are connected to state standards and testing. The Writing Expedition portion of COMPASS is not used by the teachers in the district and only some teachers have trained to create writing assignments. The district's priority is the drill-and-practice aspect of the program and it is difficult to find someone who can help when there are difficulties with printing or specific student workstations.

Chapter 5: Implications

The data indicate that Writing Expedition enabled students to respond and review several other students' work without changing the original draft. Because the revising tools were easy to use and gave students plenty of space to leave comments, the students

were motivated to comment and offer suggestions for revision. What this means for teachers is that if students are given opportunities to read more student papers and freely give comments on a draft other than the original, they give more feedback and are motivated to write.

There are drawbacks involved in this use of this program for writing. Students were unable to print their drafts and comments. Students also found the spell and grammar check to be slower than the grammar and spell check in Microsoft Word. Due to time constraints, some students were unable to utilize all of the aspects of the program. It is difficult from a teacher's standpoint to organize the review process, or determine who reads whose paper. Some students had five people read their drafts while some students only had one other student read their original draft.

The next time I use Writing Expedition, I would make it clear to students before they chose their topic that their writing would be shared with several classmates. I would explain that classmates will be reading the student writer's personal ideas and thoughts and that they may think twice before picking very personal topics when using Writing Expedition. I would also allow students time to talk to the peer writers in between computer lab sessions to explain some of their comments to the peer writers. I would also give a mini-lessons on how to give constructive comments to others and how simply asking questions about the writing will make the writer rethink or "re-vision" their writing. I would also ask that students spend some time revising their own writing before submitting to the teacher. To deal with students who finish quickly, I would have supplemental activities prepared for students. I would give students chances to walk away from their writing before being asked to write the next draft. Students could be guided

through the revision process with a checklist that asks them to evaluate several aspects of another student's writing (i.e. mechanics, introduction and conclusion, use of descriptive words, paragraph structure etc.). It would also be beneficial for students to see a hard copy of the comments so they would not have to flip back and forth between the original draft and the draft with the suggestions.

It would be better to use this program in a lab with unlimited access, so that students could continue to work through the process. It would also be helpful to use this software for several writing assignments, preferably consecutively. This process would work better if there were unlimited printing capabilities. This would allow students to print several drafts of their paper with comments which they could read in the classroom or at home, and would enable them to print a final hard copy for their portfolios. It would also be ideal if I could spend time with each student as they read comments given by other students and explain to them that some comments can be ignored while others are important to look at. Each child would have the opportunity to read several papers before returning to their original draft. This activity would help the writer and the reviewer. The writer would receive comments that would help him or her improve the piece of writing. The reviewers might also refine their writing skills, perhaps applying their reviewing comments to their own work.

Some follow-up studies could examine how student participation in revision changes after using this program over a longer period of time. Would students become more comfortable with the program and leave more comments? Or would student motivation to leave comments begin to falter and lose its initial excitement as the students became more familiar with the program? A study over a longer period of time would

allow the researcher see how students' revision changes over time with more discussion of how to comment and how to improve writing.

This study has shown that students sharing writing with peers in an online environment is an authentic technological experience that motivates students to revise. Writing Expedition allows more students to read and comment on classmates' papers than is possible in the classroom with pen and paper. Writing Expedition makes this possible because student reviewers can read many students' papers, easily leave comments with blue tabs and comment boxes, and do not feel that they are intruding on anyone's personal space because their comments are stored in a second draft. The student's role as a peer writer is validated with the authentic experience of writing for an audience. The peer writer can "re-vision" their writing by reading the comments from their peers. They can use these comments or ignore them to communicate their ideas on paper.

Students walk away from this process understanding that writing is a process in which a student's role may be, at times, reviewer, reviser, and writer. Students see that writing is a communication of ideas to an audience, a communication that must be reworked until all ideas are as clear to the reader as possible. Writing Expedition allows students to easily participate in all of these roles. Their role as peer reviewer gives them the opportunity to think about how peers communicate ideas, to see a variety of writing styles and to offer suggestions to peers. Their role as peer reviser allows them to rework their ideas so that all audiences can read their words and find meaning. Their role as peer writer gives them the ability to communicate with an audience, the same audience who

helped them write their piece. Writing Expedition gives students the opportunity to fill all of the roles needed to fully participate in the "writing process."

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APPENDIX A

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

its effect on

INSTRUCTIONS

1 One summer at my mom's work something strange happened that Inever thought would. I go to my mom's work every summer.One day I was at my mom's work. I wanted to go with my mom's boss Warren and my sister to go get lunch. I was running after the car and finally he stopped! I got in but my door wasnPunctuationt closed and he started driving. I started closing the door and iCapitalization fell out ! hCapitalizatione stopped and got out and Capitalizationi heared him say are you ok. i saieSpellingd "yes im ok". I felt scraps on my laSpellingges and blood dripping down my legs and arms. I got back in the car and my sister said are you alright and i said yes. They both kept asking me as a joke. When we came back my sister and Warren got yelled at i said it wasnt there fault. My sister wasnPunctuationt aloud to play around with Warren anymore. I felt really bad for my sister.

My mom works at Custers Garage. She is the ast.

1You should put the secound paragraph before the first one as a introduction. Some of the words in your story need to be capitalized, and a few puncuation errors.

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READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

PROMPT 1

[illegible] about the stc [illegible]

YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE INSTRUCTIONS AT ANY TIME.

One day when i was about 4 years old, I was playing with action figures. Since I was so little Capitalization i was out of control with them. For example I was throwing them at different things arounc the room. Then I wasn't paying attention to the hot iron right next to me.

I threw the action figure u in the air which hit the iron and it fell. Just my luck the iron landed on my hand. I started to scream so loud that the neighbors heard it. My grandmom (who was baby sitting me) rushed to the seen. A this time I was riving in pain. It felt like someone was tearing the skin off my hand. So my grandmor took the iron off my hand faster than you could say "bubbles."Then she rushed me into the kitchen and trid to heal it with butter and oil. That just made it hurt worse. Finally she put it under cold wate for about five minutes. After my hand was out of the water i put ice on it to slow the pain down. I finally stopped crying. At first the pain was unbearable.

Well after all Capitalization i was better and went back to playing with action figures. I learned my lesson to never play with any thing near an iro again.

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READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

It was Scary! We were scrimmaging the 90lbs and they were a lot bigger than us. It's tSpellinguff, but we had to play them and try to win. We started with the ball, so I had to get ready to run the ball. First, we did a couple of plays and I only had to block and then I ran the ball and I got ten yards. We then did two more plays and then went on defence. I played on the defence of line because I am good at rushing the quarter back and stopping the run.

It's really fun playing defence until I was trying to make a tackle and I landed on my hand, it hurt so bad. People were asking me if I was alright I said " I'm Fine ", but it hurt really bad. I sat out for about five plays and then went I started to feel a little better. I played a little more and then went on offence, but I didn't run the ball so I wouldn't get hurt again. Football is really fun, but get hurt doing stuff like making a tackle,running the ball, or even blocking. I didn't get it x-rayed

1Just fix a few errors ten it
be fine.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

right away, I waited to see if it felt any better by the next day.

The next day it didn't feel much better, but Capitalization i still went to school. I went through a normal day going to Mr.G Spelling off's class first. I didn't move it much then, but after recess I went to the nurses office and she said Imight have to get it x-rayed after school. I finished my lunch and went Mrs.McDonnell's class room and did every thing I had to do in her class. After school I got picked up by my dad and went to the Emergency Room. On the way there I thought it might have been broken, but I didnt want it to be. Then I would have to miss football for at 2 least two weeks it depends on how bad its broken.

2 Add a space here.

When I got there I had to give them a 3 lot of information a Spelling md then had to wait for 20 minutes. When I was waiting I watched T.V., Capitalization there wasn't many people there but it still takes a long time to get it x-rayed and everything else. I finally got in there and Capitalization i had to wait in a little room beacause I was waiting to get it x-rayed, there was a line. It was sort of scary , but I could handle it when I got in the room to get x-rayed Punctuation Capitalization it was dark and there was machine that I had to put my hand under. It went fast, but after I still had to wait to get the x-rays back, it took about 10 minutes. I got them back and it was sprained , I was so happy that it wasn't broken. I hope to never break or sprain my knuckle again!

3 Add a space here.

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Manager. She helps kids get to school and back home. She also helps us go on field trips. My mom has a radio in our house so i can see if i missed the bus or if the bus is goinSpelling to be late. Also I will always know if wSpellinge school is closed because my mom is one of the first people to know. Thats what my mom does at work.

When I go to my moms work I do things for my mom and for Warren. I go to my mom's work every summer. Warren and me joke around a lot we are like friends. I don't get payed to work there, but my mom sometimes brings me to the mall only if i work the whole day or week. I like goin to my mom's work because i like jokSpellingeing around with Warren. Thats what happened when i went to my mom's work one summer.

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READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

PROMPT 1

A severe storm has hit your area. Write about the storm and its effect on you.

YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE INSTRUCTIONS AT ANY TIME.

1

It was Scary! We were scrimmaging the 90lbs and they were a lot bigger than us. It's tSpellinguff, but we had to play them and try to win. We started with the ball, so I had to get ready to run the ball. First, we did a couple of plays and I only had to block and then I ran the ball and I got ten yards. We then did two more plays and then went on defence. I played on the defence of line because I am good at rushing the quarter back and stopping the run.

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1Just fix a few errors ten it will be fine.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

PROMPT 1

[illegible] about the sto[illegible]

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